



Elder abuse: Screening in Iranian families

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Abstract

Background: The rate of elder abuse has been increasing worldwide. This study aimed at identifying the group of elders susceptible to abuse and determining the influential factors of elder abuse.

Methods: A total of 683 elders, living in rural and urban areas of Qazvin (Iran), participated in this cross-sectional study that was conducted during September to December 2015. They were selected by stratified multistage random sampling method and filled in a standard questionnaire (H-S/EAST). Multiple logistic regression models were used for data analysis in Microsoft SPSS v.18. Type 1 error was considered equal to 0.05.

Results: The average age of participants was 68.5 ± 7.6 . Also, the prevalence of elder abuse in this study was 38.5 (95% CI: 3.34-42.3). After eliminating the confounders and applying multiple regression analysis, we found a significant association between elder abuse and factors such as education level (OR= 2.003, 95% CI: 1.177-3.409), residence (OR= 3.53, 95% CI: 1.969-6.324), and age (OR= 0.963, 95% CI: 0.931-0.995).

Conclusion: The results of this study indicated a high prevalence of elder abuse in the studied population. By identifying high-risk individuals for elder abuse and planning to improve their quality of life, we will be able to successfully overcome this issue.

Keywords: Elder, Elder abuse, Prevalence, Iran

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Introduction

Statistics reveal a growing elderly population in the world. With regards to the WHO reports, elderly population is expected to rise from 900 million in 2015 to 2 billion in 2050 (1). Despite the high population of elders in developed societies, it is thought that the increase in population will be seen mostly in developing countries (2, 3). WHO has predicted that elderly population, which is now 8.2%, will reach to 10.5% in 2025 and 21.7% in 2050 (4,5). There are some factors affecting the life of elders including increase in their population, urbanization, and establishment of global village. With regards to social changes in human societies, such as women employment and increased poverty, it could be concluded that the possibility of elderly abuse will rise (1, 6, 7).

Elder abuse includes physical, emotional, sexual abuse,

ignorance, abandon, and misuse of elders. It refers to a group of behaviors that hurt the elders or cause them serious problems and are performed by persons the elders trust. In addition, ignoring elders' care by not providing their essential needs and not protecting them from being hurt are included in this definition (8).

Elder abuse is also considered as an important public health problem in both developed and developing countries. Additionally, there is some evidence indicating that 1 to 10 elders experience this phenomenon every month (3). WHO has also reported that the prevalence of elder abuse is 1% to 15%. Nowadays, there is a high rate of elder abuse reported all over the world. This probably has to do with the use of different tools (7,9). A nationwide Canadian study reported that at least 4% of the population

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↑What is "already known" in this topic:

Despite the Islamic advice about the necessity of respecting elders, their abuse has been remained a health and social issue, and only a small proportion of elders request help and use the facilities offered to them.

→What this article adds:

A large proportion of studies have been conducted in rich countries, however, this study showed the prevalence of elder abuse in Iran, a country in the Middle East. The factors such as age, education level, and residence of elders are associated with the prevalence of elder abuse.